



CATULLE: MENDES
**THE FAIRY
SPINNING
WHEEL**



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THE FAIRY SPINNING WHEEL

THE
FAIRY SPINNING WHEEL

&
THE TALES IT SPUN

Englished by THOMAS J. VIVIAN from the French of
CATULLE MENDÈS

With Pictures by
MARION L. PEABODY



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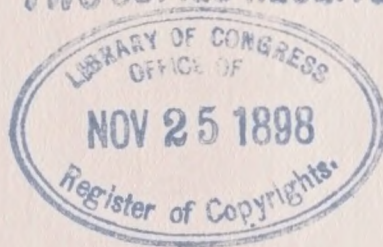
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A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.



Who has visited the Pale Islands, where it snows jasmine flowers; or has wandered through the Forest of Broceliande, where the fairy Oriana, "once upon a time," bridged the dew-drops with oaten straws to save the caterpillars from wetting their velvet feet?

Who knows the boundaries of the kingdom of Ormuz; can tell the sea in which glistens the Golden Isle; the name of the last emperor of Trebizonde, or describe the lost glories of Mataquin?

Who has heard of the silver-winged Urgande, Urgele, or Melusine; of their pale sister, Habonde; or of the wicked out-cast, Melandrine?

There may be some travellers along the byways of fancy who have landed on these elusive shores, and doubtless there are students of the recondite who have made the acquaintance of these shadowy monarchs and flitting elves; but to the great bulk of readers, even to those of fairy stories, all this is new country with stranger people.

For this reason, if for none other, this version of "Les Contes du Rouet" of Catulle Mendès should be made welcome.

But there are other reasons why the stories may claim a place among the treasured records of faeriedom,—for their delicate play of imagination, for their jauntiness, their sudden turns of situation, their unexpected twists of phrase, and for their general sweetness and lovability.

Then, too, fairy stories as they are, in that they deal with the airy creatures of Times and Places that never were and never could be, they have often a deeper significance than appears on their surface; and behind their quips and wonders there lies a lesson,—quaint, severe, or pathetic, as was the mood of the story-spinner as he wrote.

For all of these reasons, and for many that are untold, “The Fairy Spinning Wheel and the Tales it Spun” is set out in its English dress with some misgiving that much of the first-hand delicacy may have been lost in the process of a change of language, but with none as to the charm of the original.

THOMAS J. VIVIAN.

NEW YORK, October, 1898.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.



SERIOUS history is not the only thing that has been written in a slipshod fashion. There has been a good deal of blundering in fairy tales as well, and even the most careful and best-informed storytellers have not always set down things exactly as they happened. For instance, although we have believed up to this time that the eldest of Cinderella's wicked sisters went to the Prince's ball in a dress of red velvet, draped with English lace, the fact is that she wore a scarlet robe, embroidered with silver passementerie and golden cords.

So, too, while it is true that, of all the monarchs invited to the wedding of the White Cat, some did come in sedan chairs, others in coaches, and others—from distant countries—mounted upon elephants, tigers, and eagles,—while all this is true, the other fact has not been stated,—that the King of Mataquin made his entry into the court of the palace seated between the wings of a great dragon, from whose nostrils there came flames of jewels.

You may perhaps be curious to find out how I come to know so much upon these very important points, and I will tell you.

Some time ago I used to visit a hut which stood beside a field, where there lived a very old woman, old enough to be a fairy; and, indeed, I always suspected her of being one. After I had once or twice kept her company while she warmed herself in the sunshine before her little cottage, she took a liking

to me, and a few days before she died—or returned to her mysterious country, I don't know which—she offered me a keepsake, an old Spinning Wheel.

It was an extraordinary Spinning Wheel; for every time I turned the wheel it began to talk, or rather to sing, using a sweet little shaky voice, something like that of a grandmother who during the day has prattled more than she should. What it said or sang was a number of pretty stories. Some of these no one else knew of, and others it knew better than any one else; and, in the latter case, it took a sort of mischievous pleasure in pointing out and correcting the mistakes made by those who had busied themselves in writing these stories. You see, then, that I had a teacher of a very remarkable sort. And let me say, while I think of it, you would be wonderfully astonished if I were to tell you of all the things and changes and additions that the Wheel has revealed to me.

You imagine, I have no doubt, that you know each detail of the story of the Princess who, having pricked her hand with a spindle, fell into a sleep so sound that nothing could rouse her, and who was laid in the castle in the middle of a wood upon a bed of gold and silver embroidery,—well, now, I am sorry to tell you that you do not know the true ending of the story at all.

“Yes, yes,” purred the Wheel, “it is true enough that the Princess slept for a hundred years, when a young Prince, moved by love and glory, resolved to penetrate the wood and awaken her. The great trees, the thorns, and the brambles opened of themselves to let him pass. He walked toward the castle, which he saw at the end of a long avenue, and soon entered it. What surprised him not a little was to find that not one of his retinue had been able to follow him, the trees crowding themselves together again as soon as he had passed. At last, when he had crossed several courts paved with marble,



passing on his way a number of red-nosed lackeys who slept beside their cups, in which were still some drops of wine; when he had rambled down endless passages, and mounted great staircases on which were guards snoring, with carbines on their shoulders,—after passing all these things and persons, he found himself in a golden chamber, and saw upon a bed, whose curtains were open on all sides, the most beautiful sight that had ever met his eyes. It was a Princess who seemed to be about sixteen or seventeen years of age, and whose beauty was beyond words.

“I am willing to admit,” said the Wheel, “that these things happened just so, and that up to this point the story-tellers have not strayed away from the truth. But nothing can be more misleading than the rest of the story; and I must contradict the statement that the Sleeping Beauty, when awakened, looked lovingly at the Prince, and that she said: ‘Is that you, my lord? You have been long waited for.’

“If you want to know what really did happen, listen. The Princess stretched one white arm, then the other, half opened her eyes, shut them again, as though troubled by the light, yawned a little; while Puff, her lap-dog, awakened also, snapped and bristled with anger.

“‘Who is there?’ the daughter of the fairies asked at length, ‘and what is wanted?’

“The Prince fell upon his knees, and replied:—

“‘He who is here adores you, and has braved the greatest perils’ (he was something of a boaster, you see) ‘to relieve you from the enchantment in which you have so long been held captive. Leave this bed on which you have been sleeping for a hundred years, give me your hand, and let us return together to light and life.’

“Astonished at these words, she looked attentively at him, and could not keep back a smile; for he was a young and

shapely Prince, with the loveliest eyes in the world, and he spoke in a very sweet and pleasant manner.

“‘It is really true, then,’ she asked, putting back her hair, ‘that the hour has come in which I am to be delivered from my long sleep?’

“‘It is,’ answered the Prince.

“‘Ah!’ said she.

“She thought awhile, and then said,—

“‘What will happen to me if I leave this Shadowland, and go back to life?’

“‘Can you not guess?’ asked the Prince. ‘Have you forgotten that you are the daughter of a King? You will see your people running to meet you, crying out for joy and waving banners of every color. Women and children will kiss the hem of your robe. In a word, you will be the most powerful and petted of all the queens of the East.’

“‘It would please me to be a Queen,’ she said. ‘What else would happen?’

“‘You would live in a palace that glistened like gold,’ replied the Prince, ‘and in mounting the steps of your throne you would walk upon inlaid patterns of precious stones. Courtiers grouped about would sing your praises, and the oldest and wisest heads would be bowed before the power and grace of your smile.’

“‘To be praised and obeyed is charming,’ said she. ‘Would I have any other pleasure?’

“‘Waiting-maids, clever as fairies, would clothe you in dresses of the tints of the sun and moon. You would powder your hair with diamond dust, and you would have a mantle of golden cloth trailing yards behind you.’

“‘That would be charming,’ she said. ‘I always did like fine clothes.’

“‘Pages as lovely as humming-birds would offer you the

finest candies in beautiful comfit-boxes, and would pour perfumed wine into your cup.'

"That pleases me,' said she. 'I always had a sweet tooth. Would these be all my joys?'

"Another pleasure, the greatest of all, yet awaits you,' said the Prince.

"What is it?'

"You will be beloved,' he replied.

"By whom?'

"By me. That is, if you do not think me unworthy to aspire to your affection.'

"Well,' said she, 'you are a Prince of good appearance, and your clothes fit you very well.'

"If,' continued the Prince, 'you deign not to send me away, I will give you my whole heart, as another kingdom of which you will be the sovereign; and I will never cease to be the obedient slave of your most wilful caprices.'

"Oh, what happiness you promise me!' exclaimed the Princess.

"Rise, then, dearest, and follow me.'

"Follow you? Already? Wait a moment,' said the Princess. 'I must think a little. You have certainly held out more than one tempting promise; but, as you see, I must be sure first that I am not leaving what is better behind me.'

"What do you mean, Princess?' exclaimed the Prince.

"I have slept for a hundred years, it is true; but it is also true that for a hundred years I have been dreaming. I am a Queen in my dreams, and of what a lovely, lovely kingdom! My dream-palace has walls of light. For courtiers, I have angels who treat me to music of delightful sweetness. When I walk, it is upon pathways strewn with stars. Then, if you could only know of the beautiful dream-robcs that I wear, and of the delicious fruits that are set on my table, and of the

honeyed wines in which I dip my lips! And, as to love, believe me, I am not without it; for in my dreams I am adored by a lover more handsome than any of the Princes of the earth, one who has been faithful to me for a hundred years. All things considered, my lord, I do not think I should gain anything by coming out of my enchantment. I pray you, sir, wish me good-day, and let me go to sleep again.'

"Whereupon she turned her pretty face toward the wall, spread her hair over her eyes, and once more renewed her long sleep; while Puff stopped yelping, crooked in his legs, and laid his muzzle on his paws.

"The Prince withdrew in high displeasure; and since that time, thanks to the protection of the good fairies, no one has troubled the rest of the Sleeping Beauty in the Woods."

THE THREE SOWERS

THE THREE SOWERS.



THREE young companions set out to see the world. As the season was winter, it rained and blew and snowed all over the surrounding country, but the road along which the three passed was golden with sunshine; while each time the hawthorn bloom swayed in a gentle breeze a swarm of butterflies and bees rose from it into the air. This was because the three companions were youths of sixteen; and, it being springtime in their hearts, it was springtime all about them. In the same way, if an old man goes into a garden on a rosy morning of May, the daylight seems to fade out, the sky grows cloudy, and the white honeysuckles look like so many snowflakes.

So these three walked along, just following the road; and that, after all, is the best way to walk.

One of these youths was named Honorat, the other was called Chrysor, while the third and youngest was called Aloys. They were all three handsome, with the freshness of health upon their cheeks, and with curly hair blown here and there by the wind.

Seeing them thus walking along that sunny road, you would scarcely have noticed any difference between them; but a close examination would have shown that Honorat had the proudest air, that Chrysor was quiet and shrewd, and that Aloys was the most gentle and timid. What they seemed to be on the outside, that they were within; for the body is but

the casing of the soul, only men have the bad habit of wearing this envelope with the wrong side out.

Honorat, in his fancies, pictured himself as the son of some most powerful king. Poor, hungry child of Fortune, eating the crusts thrown to him from the windows of the rich, drinking water from the springs in the hollow of his hand, and sleeping in the shelter of barns, he yet dreamed of being surrounded by power and glory. He dreamed, too, of courtiers, gorgeous with lace, kneeling before him in a throne-room supported on pillars of jasper and marble; while, through wide folding-doors, ambassadors entered, hastening from foreign lands, behind them coming African slaves, clad in red satin and bearing chests in which were marvellous and charming jewels, fine pearls, silks, and brocade,—the humble offerings of the Emperor of Trebizonde and the King of Sirinagon. Or else he imagined that he was leading an innumerable army to victory, putting the troops of the enemy to flight with his flashing sword, and then that his loving people bore him in triumph underneath arches decorated with flapping banners, over which Glory spread her wings.

Chrysor dreamed of things less heroic. His thoughts ran to money, great sums of money, always money; to gold and silver, especially to gold; to diamonds, without count, any one of which would be worth all the treasures of the richest monarchs. The gold of his visions was forever sparkling before his eyes, and flowing between his fingers, even when he held out his hands to the passers-by, and was thankful for a copper cent. So great was his love for gold, indeed, that, had he been placed between two doors, one leading to paradise and the other to a treasure chamber, I do not believe he would have opened that which led to paradise.

As to little Aloys, better-looking and more delicate than his companions, he troubled himself nothing about palaces,



courtiers, ambassadors, or armies. In place of a table laden with a service of gold, he would have preferred a corner in a flowery meadow. With his youthful appearance,—an appearance, in fact, almost more like that of a young girl than like that of a lad,—he kept his eyes fixed on the ground, watching the lady-birds climbing up the blades of grass, and raising them only to admire the rosy dawn or the crimson sunset. The only pleasure he desired—and he really enjoyed it—was to sing as he walked,—to sing in the morning the song he had composed on the evening before, a song of pretty shyness, set to a pleasant tune, which the birds of the bushes took up and sang back as a chorus.

So it happened that, if in the night-time, in the clear silence of the stars, they heard one of those strange noises which are but the sighs of Nature in her sleep,—if one of these noises were heard, “Listen,” Honorat would say, “is not that the sound of a trumpet?”

Chrysor, on the other hand, would ask, “Is not that the distant sound of a piece of gold rolling into a drawer?” while Aloys would murmur, “I fancy it must be the chirping of some little birds in their nest, chirping before they go to sleep again.”

One day an old woman, who was digging out a narrow furrow in a barren field, saw these three youths coming along the road. She was so old and so ragged that you might have taken her for Long Ago in tatters, and she was as ugly as she was old. One yellow eye was gone, and the other was half covered with a film. Three tufts of gray hair stuck out from the folds of a dirty old cotton handkerchief wound around her head. Her skin was red and wrinkled, and her lips went flip-flap over her toothless gums every time she breathed. Any one who met her would have hurried away, anxious to see a rose or a

pretty child to make him forget her ugliness. She was, however, only a fairy in disguise; and no sooner did she see the three young companions, Honorat, Chrysor, and Aloys, than she transformed herself into a lovely sylph clad in gorgeous robes, the skirts of which were so embroidered in flowers of precious stones that butterflies came floating about her, thinking that the whole of April was stopping in this barren field.

“What, ho! my pretty youths,” said the fairy: “stop, I pray you. I wish to do you a favor. First, because you are young, which is a charming thing in itself, and next because I have noticed that you always take care when walking not to crush the poor little insects as they cross the lane. Come here and sow whatever seed you have in this furrow which I have just dug out. Do this, and, on my honor as a fairy, this field, barren though it seems to be, will give you back a hundred-fold of all that you put into it.”

I leave you to think how charmed the three travellers were to see so sweet a creature and to hear her speak such pleasant words. At the same time they found themselves very much embarrassed, being so poor that they had not the faintest thing in the world to put into the fairy furrow.

“Alas, madame,” said Honorat, after having talked a moment with Chrysor and Aloys, “we have nothing which we would wish to see return a hundred-fold, unless it be our dreams; and they will never bear fruit.”

“How do you know that?” asked the fairy, shaking out her hair to drive away a butterfly which was very naturally mistaking her for a bed of pinks. “How do you know that?” she repeated. “Sow your dreams into the open ground, and we will see what will come up.”

Then Honorat knelt down, and, putting his mouth to the furrow, began to whisper into it all his ambitious fancies. He told the furrow about the palace of jasper and marble, crowded

with courtiers in fine laces, of ambassadors entering by the royal doors, of negroes borne down beneath the burden of tributes, and of armies and triumphs. He had not time to finish all his story when troops of horsemen in golden breast-plates and with eagles' wings for crests came galloping over the plain, proclaiming it aloud that they sought for the son of the dead monarch to conduct him to his kingdom. As soon as they saw Honorat, they cried, "It is he!" and carried him off as their master with sounds of joy to his marble palaces, to his battles, and his spoils.

Having seen this, Chrysor did not long delay to kneel down and sow into the soil his dream-wishes for riches, for money and jewels. Scarcely had he spoken twenty words before the furrow was filled with gold and silver, with diamonds and pearls. Drunk with joy, he leaped upon these treasures, grasped them in his hands, filled his pockets and even his mouth with them, and went off, the richest of the rich, seeking for some hiding-place in which to conceal his treasures.

"Well, Aloys," said the fairy, "what are *you* thinking about? Why do you not follow the example of your companions?"

He did not reply at first, having scarcely taken any notice of what had passed, his attention having been given to a myrtle bush around which a wild clematis was lovingly twining itself.

"Why should I?" he replied at length. "There is nothing I wish for except to listen to the nightingales singing in the evening and to hear the crickets chirping in the hot noon-day. All that I could do would be to sing a song into the furrow."

"Well, sing it," replied the fairy. "Perhaps the seed of a song is worth more than anything else."

So Aloys sang his song into the furrow; and, as he began his second verse, a beautiful maiden came out of the opening

earth, and, linking her arm in his, said: "Ah, how sweetly you sing! Let me be your friend and new companion."

Thus did the good fairy come to the aid of the three wandering youths who had been walking along the sunlit road, heedless of where they went.

But, when a little time had passed, there came about such results to two of the youths as were sad indeed.

Beaten by an obstinate enemy after doing wonders of courage, King Honorat was obliged to quit his capital and to take refuge in a monastery, where they cut off his hair, after having first taken away his crown.

A band of robbers discovered the hiding-place where Chrysor the Rich had stowed away his treasures, stole it, and left him to beg for alms on the highways.

Aloys alone was happy; for the maiden who loved his songs soon loved him also, and married him, so that she might be with him always.

THE PRINCESS BIRDIE

THE PRINCESS BIRDIE.



THOUGH she was so small that she might easily have been taken for the elder sister of her doll, the daughter of the King of the Golden Isle was the prettiest Princess you ever saw. When she had arrived at young womanhood, her father asked her if she had any objections to being married.

“Oh, none at all,” she replied.

“In that case,” said her father, “I shall give a grand feast, and invite to it all the young Princes of the neighboring countries, from whom you may make a choice that will be worthy of yourself and me.”

“Do not take so much trouble, father,” said the Princess. “It would simply be putting you to a great deal of unnecessary expense. For a long time I have had a sweetheart, and there is nothing more that I could wish for than that you should give me for a husband the nightingale who warbles every evening in the rose-bush that climbs about my window.”

The King, as you may well imagine, had all he could do to remain as serious as a King should always be.

“What!” cried he: “you wish to marry a bird, do you? to present me with a feathered son-in-law, and live in a cage? A charming idea, I must say!”

These mocking speeches hurt the Princess so cruelly that she retired to her room with a bursting heart. In the evening she leaned out of her window, while the nightingale sang in the hawthorn.

“Ah! beautiful bird,” she cried, “this is not the time to be happy; for my father will not consent to our marriage.”

But to this the nightingale replied,—

“Do not sorrow, dear Princess: everything will be well, because we love each other.”

And he consoled her by singing all the sweetest songs that he knew.

About this time three giants, who were also very famous magicians, laid siege to the capital of the kingdom of the Golden Isle. They had no need of any army, so strong and cruel were they. They marched up to the city walls, and announced, in voices like so many tempests, that, if in three days the city were not delivered over to them, they would destroy it to the very foundations, and kill all the inhabitants. The terror caused by this announcement was so great that all the mothers ran about the streets, pressing their weeping children in their arms; while many of the courtiers talked of submitting to the three magicians without striking a blow.

As a means of saving himself in this terrible peril, the King sent couriers to all the neighboring Princes, announcing that he would give his daughter in marriage to whomsoever would deliver him from these giants. But the Princes, notwithstanding the promised recompense, kept away, believing the combat to be too unequal. On hearing this, all the people looked forward to perishing in the ruins of the city, when it happened that just before the evening of the third day two soldiers, who were watching on the walls, saw the three giants dash out of the tent, where they had been taking an afternoon's nap, and dart off, howling like mad folks.

The general joy was now as great as the general despair had been, yet no one could guess the cause of so unforeseen a deliverance.



“Father,” said the Princess to the King, “it is the bird I love to whom you must render thanks for this happy event. He flew into the tent of the giants while they slept, and pecked their eyes out with his beak. You will of course keep your promise, and let me marry the nightingale who sings in the climbing rose-tree.”

But the King begged his daughter not to trouble him with such foolish fancies, and turned his back upon her in a very angry humor.

That evening, when the nightingale sang among the flowers and leaves,

“Ah! beautiful bird, whom I love,” said the Princess, “this is not the time to rejoice; for, although you have delivered us from the giants, my father will not consent to our marriage.”

The nightingale replied, “Do not trouble yourself, dear Princess: all will yet be well, because we love each other.”

And he consoled her by singing new songs which he had just composed.

Some time after this the Treasurer of the palace disappeared without any one being able to imagine what had become of him; and at the same time the great coffer of cedar and gold was found empty, without so much as a ruby, diamond, or pearl left in any of its corners. The King, who was a very greedy man, showed himself extremely put out about this loss, and went around bemoaning it like a beggar that had been robbed of his pennies. At last he sent out heralds to all the neighboring kingdoms, announcing that he would give his daughter in marriage to the man—Prince or no Prince—who should find out where the robber was and bring back the jewels.

All this went for nothing, however; and many days passed without any news of the Treasurer or treasure. But one morn-

ing, when the King gloomily opened the coffer, he uttered a cry of joy; for there were all the pearls, the rubies, and the diamonds back again. You would have said that the room was full of stars, so great was the brilliancy of the precious stones.

You can easily picture the satisfaction of the King, and he immediately set about finding out who had brought back the jewels.

“Father,” said the Princess, “it is the bird I love to whom you must give thanks for this happy recovery. He had watched and followed the robber, and knew where the treasure was hidden. During many days and during many nights, with great trouble,—carrying a ruby in his left claw, a pearl in his right, and a diamond in his beak,—he has flown from the hidden treasure to the coffer. I held the window open for him while you slept or while you were hunting. You surely now will keep your promise, and let me marry the nightingale.”

But the King was as obstinate as he was greedy. He grew angry, and threatened to lock her in a tower if she ever spoke to him again of marriage with such a husband.

That evening, while the nightingale sang in the moonlight,—

“Ah! beautiful bird, whom I love,” said the Princess, “this is not the time to rejoice; for, though you have restored my father’s treasure, he will not consent to our marriage.”

The nightingale replied,—

“Do not trouble yourself, Princess; for all will yet be well with us, since we love each other.”

And he consoled her by singing the most charming songs she had ever heard.

Notwithstanding the nightingale’s songs, the Princess languished and died of a broken heart. To carry her to the

royal tomb, she was laid upon a mass of white carnations and roses, where she lay whiter even than the flowers. She was followed by a crowd in tears, the King marching beside the perfumed bier, uttering cries of grief that would have moved a heart of marble. When they had arrived at the cemetery, and were about to lay the body in the tiny grave, a nightingale fluttered by, and, perching himself upon the branch of a yew-tree, said,—

“King, what will you do for him who shall give you back the Princess alive?”

“I will give him the Princess herself,” cried the King,—
“ay, and with her half of my kingdom.”

“Keep your kingdom,” replied the nightingale. “Your daughter is all I want. But beware lest you break your oath.”

At these words the nightingale flew down from the tree, and, perching himself upon the chin of the dead, placed a blade of grass between her lips with his beak.

Immediately the Princess sat up alive and well.

“O father,” said she, “surely now you will keep your promise, and permit me to marry the nightingale.”

Alas! the King forgot his oath, and no sooner did he hold his living daughter in his arms once more than he ordered his courtiers to chase away the impertinent bird.

Then there came to pass a wonderful thing.

The little daughter of the King began to grow smaller and smaller, like a flake of snow melting in the sunshine, until she was a tiny-winged creature no bigger than a baby’s fist. The loveliest of Princesses had become the loveliest of birds; and while her father, too late, repented of his ingratitude, and held out his arms in despair, she flew away with the nightingale to the neighboring woods.

THE MIRROR

THE MIRROR.



THERE was once another kingdom in which no mirror could be found. All looking-glasses,—those to be hung upon the wall, those to be held in the hand, and those that had been formerly carried at the girdle,—all had been broken to atoms by the order of the Queen. The discovery of the smallest looking-glass or the smallest piece of a looking-glass in any house meant the punishment of those who owned it, with the most fearful pains.

The reason for this most extraordinary state of affairs was as follows. Ugly, so ugly that the most hideous monsters seemed charming beside her, the Queen not only wished never to see herself, but was also determined that no one else should have the chance of finding out how pretty his or her face was when compared to that of her own. You may easily believe that these laws by no means satisfied the girls and young women of that country. Of what use was it to have beautiful eyes, a mouth as fresh as roses, or to put flowers in your hair, if you could not see how all these things looked? You could not even admire yourself in a stream or in a lake, for all the rivers and ponds had been covered over with closely fitting slabs of stone. Water was drawn from wells so deep that no one could see their liquid surface, and kept in dark, flat dishes, in which there was no reflection.

The people of that kingdom were, in fact, in despair, especially those who were vain; and there were vain persons in that country as well as there are in this.

All of this pleased the Queen, who was happy to know that her subjects were as much dissatisfied at not being able to see themselves as she was furious whenever she caught a glimpse of her own hideous face.

It happened, however, that in a certain suburb of the royal city there was a young girl called Jacintha, who was less disturbed than many of the others about the looking-glass law, because of a sweetheart whom she had. When some one finds you pretty, and is always telling you so, there is no need of a mirror.

"Now tell me truly," she would say, "the color of my eyes does not displease you?"

"They are like forget-me-nots, in each of which has fallen a drop of clear amber," her lover would reply.

"I have not a dark skin?"

"Your forehead is purer than snow, and your cheeks are like pale roses."

"What do you think of my mouth?" she went on.

"It is like a ripe raspberry."

"And my teeth, if you please?"

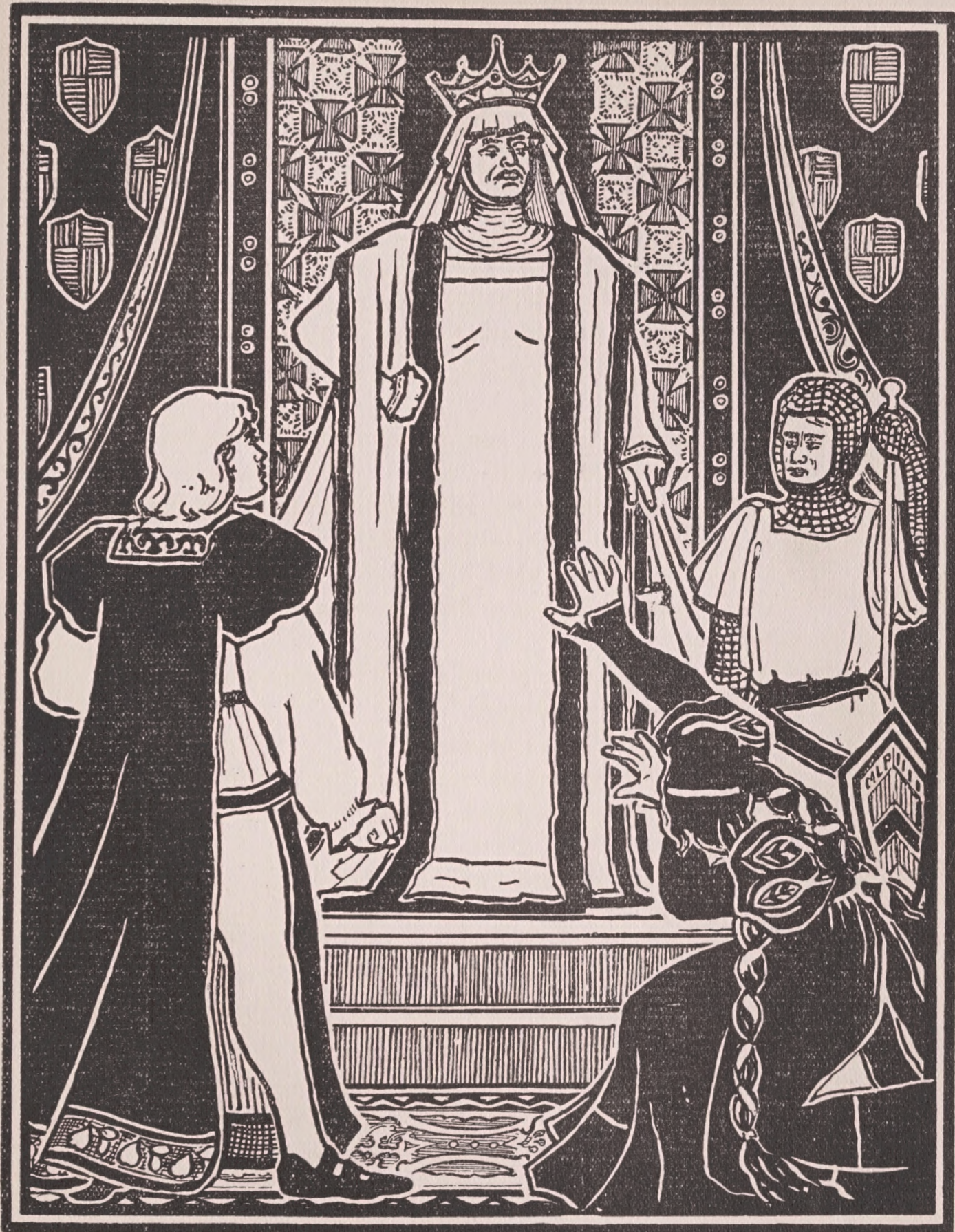
"They are like grains of rice," said the youth.

"And what about my ears? Have I any cause to be unhappy about them?"

"Yes," he replied, "if one need be uneasy about having two little pink shells nestling against her hair."

So they talked, she charmed to listen, and he to see and speak.

One day he asked her to marry him; and she blushed, and consented. Unfortunately, the news of the coming marriage reached the ears of the wicked Queen, whose sole pleasure it was to destroy the happiness of others; and Jacintha, being prettier than any one else, was hated all the more for it.



Some days before the wedding Jacintha was walking in her mother's orchard, when an old hag drew near, and asked for alms, and then started back with a cry, as though she had trodden upon a toad.

"Heaven preserve us!" screamed the old hag: "what do I see?"

"Why do you cry out, and what have you seen, my good woman?" asked Jacintha.

"What do I see?" said the beldame. "Why, the ugliest thing on earth."

"Then you certainly do not mean me," said Jacintha, smiling.

"Alas, yes, my poor child, I do mean you. I have been long in this world, but never yet have I met with any one so frightful as you are."

"I frightful!" exclaimed Jacintha.

"A hundred times more so than I can describe."

"What do you mean by saying such things?" said the girl, half crying. "Look at my eyes."

"They are mud-colored," said the hag; "but that would not matter so much if you had not such a horrible squint."

"My skin" —

"From its appearance, I should say that you had been rubbing charcoal on your cheeks and forehead."

"My mouth" — stammered poor Jacintha.

"Is as colorless as a faded flower of autumn," said the wretched old woman.

"My teeth" —

"If great yellow fangs are lovely teeth, then I never saw any lovelier than yours."

"At least my ears" — Jacintha began.

"Your ears are so big, red, and hairy," interrupted the crone, "that I shudder to look at them. And I know that I

am not pretty to look at myself, but I think I should die of shame if I had a mouth like that."

Upon this the hag, who was a wicked fairy, and, consequently, a friend of the wicked Queen, trotted off, with a burst of mocking laughter; while Jacintha dropped, weeping, upon a seat underneath the apple-trees.

Nothing could turn Jacintha from grieving over her affliction.

"I am ugly, I am ugly!" she unceasingly cried.

It was in vain that her lover assured her to the contrary.

"Leave me," she begged: "you are not telling me the truth, just because you pity me. That poor old woman had no interest in deceiving me. It is true. I am ugly. I know it."

To set her right, he brought a number of his friends to her house, every one of whom told Jacintha that it was a pleasure to look upon her. All this, however, was of no use. She insisted that they only said so to soothe her, and that she knew she was a fright. Then the youth asked her to fix the day of their marriage.

"I become your wife!" she cried. "Never. I think too tenderly of you to make you a present of such a shocking looking thing as I am."

Driven to his wits' end, the young man saw that the only way to undo the evil which the hag had done was to get a mirror, to show Jacintha the truth. But where could a mirror be found? There was not one in the whole kingdom; and the terror of the Queen was such that no workman could be induced to make one.

"To the court, then!" cried the youth. "Cruel as our Queen is, she cannot fail to be moved by my tears and by Jacintha's beauty. If it is only for a few hours, she will withdraw this cruel law, from which all our griefs have come, and let me show Jacintha the true picture of her own lovely face."

It was not without much trouble that the girl could be prevailed upon to go to the palace, but at last she consented.

“What is it? What is it?” asked the wicked Queen, in her shrill, harsh voice. “Who are these people, and what do they wish? Some one tell me, and tell me quickly.”

“Your Majesty,” replied the youth, “you have before you the most unhappy of lovers.”

“Well, I must say that is, indeed, a good reason for coming to me,” sneered the Queen.

“Do not be pitiless,” pleaded the young man.

“Why, what have I to do with your trouble?” snarled the Queen.

“If you would only permit me to have a mirror” — the youth began.

At these words the Queen rose, trembling with anger.

“You have dared to speak to me of mirrors!” she cried, grinding her teeth.

“Don’t be angry, your Majesty,” begged the youth. “Deign to hear me. This young girl, whom you see before you, so fresh and beautiful, has fallen into a most singular error. She imagines that she is ugly.”

“So she is,” shouted the Queen, with a ferocious laugh; “for, I must say, I don’t think I ever saw so odious an object.”

At these words Jacintha nearly died with grief. It was not possible now to doubt any longer, since both the Queen and the beggar-woman had said precisely the same thing. Slowly she closed her eyes, and then fell fainting upon the steps of the throne. Furious with rage at the Queen’s cruelty, the youth cried out loudly that her Majesty was insane, unless she had some reason for lying so.

He had no time to add another word before the guards threw themselves upon him, and bound him. The Queen gave

a sign; and the executioner, who was always kept at the side of the throne, advanced towards the youth.

“Do your duty,” screamed the Queen, pointing to the unfortunate young man who had insulted her. “Cut his head off before I count three.”

The executioner quietly drew his bright sword, when Jacintha feebly beat the air with her hands, and opened her eyes.

At that instant two different cries were heard: one a cry of joy, for in the polished naked steel Jacintha saw herself, and saw that she was sweetly pretty; the other a cry of agony, because the wicked Queen broke her heart with shame and rage at seeing her foul face reflected in the truthful mirror of the gleaming sword, side by side with that of the lovely Jacintha.

SNOWHEART

SNOWHEART.



THERE was once a kingdom in which lived a Princess so lovely that all the world agreed that nobody as perfect as she had ever been seen in it before. Her beauty was altogether thrown away, however, because she would love no one. Notwithstanding the prayers of her parents, she disdainfully refused all suitors who came to ask her hand. When the nephews of Kings or the sons of Emperors came to the court to propose for her, she did not even condescend to look upon them, no matter how handsome or young they might be.

“What is the use of troubling me about such trifles?” she would say, turning her pretty head away.

At last, on account of the coldness which she showed to all persons at all times, the Princess was named Snowheart. In vain her nurse, a good old woman of great experience, spoke to her as follows, with tears in her eyes:—

“Take care what you are doing,” said the dame. “It is not right to answer those who love us with all their heart with cold and cruel words. Do you mean to tell me that among all these handsome youths, who are so desirous to obtain you in marriage, there is not one toward whom you feel some tenderness? Take care, I tell you. The good fairies, who have granted you your splendid beauty, will some day or other grow angry if you continue to show yourself a miser of their gift; for what they have given you they wish that you should share with others. The more you are worth, the more you

owe: our gifts must be measured by our riches. What would you do, little one, if your protectors, angry at your indifference, should abandon you to the wickedness of certain fairies, who only rejoice in doing evil, and who are constantly hovering about young Princesses to find a chance to carry out their wicked intentions?"

But Snowheart took no account of these good counsels. She only shrugged her white shoulders, and admired herself in a mirror,—an occupation in which she found all the employment she needed.

As to the King and Queen, they grieved more than any one else over the indifference of their daughter. At last, they came to the conclusion that some evil spirit had taken possession of her; and they sent out heralds to all the countries of the world, proclaiming that they would give the Princess herself to whomsoever should deliver her from the magician of whose power she was the victim.

Now it happened about the same time that there lived in a great forest near by a hideous wood-chopper, crooked in every part of him, and who limped when he walked, because of the weight of the hump on his back. He was the terror of all the country round; for most of the time he paid but little attention to wood-chopping, and hid in a dark ravine, waiting for unwary travellers, springing on them, and then cutting off their heads with his axe at a single stroke. That done, he would empty the pockets of the corpse, and, with the money found there, would buy food and wine, with which he stuffed himself, in his hut, yelling for joy all the time. In fact, this wicked man was far happier at times than many honest persons; that is, so long as travellers passed through the forest. But the forest soon grew to have so bad a name that even the bravest people went far out of their way rather than pass



through it. Deprived of his horrible means of living, the wood-chopper nearly perished. For several days he managed to exist on the fragments of his feasts, gnawing the bones and licking out the few drops left in the bottom of empty bottles. As you may imagine, this was but poor fare for such a drunkard and glutton as he; and then the rigors of winter came, and filled up the measure of his discomfort. Crouched in his hut, through which the wind blew and into which the snow fell, he almost died of cold and hunger; while he dared not seek help from the people of the neighboring village because of the hate which they bore him.

You may ask why he did not make a fire with the dried branches and leaves that lay about him. He did not because both the wood and leaves were so full of frost that there was no way of lighting them. One would suppose, indeed, that, in order to punish this wicked man, an unknown power prevented the fuel from taking fire. However that might be, the wood-chopper passed many unhappy days, and still more wretched nights, near his empty cupboard and cold fireside; and to see him thus, thin and shivering, you would surely have pitied him, had you not known how truly he deserved his present misery by his past crimes.

However, there was somebody who took pity on him — a wicked fairy called Melandrine. It was her pleasure to witness evil, and so it was but natural that she should love those who did it.

One night, while he was most forlorn and desolate, his teeth chattering with cold and his fingers crippled with chilblains, Melandrine appeared before him, coming up out of the ground. She was not a beautiful fairy, with garlands of flowers in her hair; nor did she wear a dress of brocade, covered with dazzling embroidery of precious stones. She was ugly, bald, as hump-

backed as he, and as ragged as a pauper. You would surely have taken her for an old beggar-woman on the highway; for, when one is wicked, one cannot be pretty, even if a fairy.

"Don't be cast down, my poor man," she said. "I am come to aid you. Follow me."

Very much astonished at this apparition, the wood-cutter followed Melandrine to a clearing in the wood, where he saw great drifts of snow heaped all around.

"Now, then," said she, "light a fire."

"Ah!" he cried, shivering: "snow will not burn."

"That's just where you are mistaken," she cried. "Take this sprig of wild bean, which I have brought you, and you need only touch any one of these snow-drifts to have as jolly a fire as you wish."

He did as she directed; and, judge of his astonishment, when, scarcely had the sprig of wild bean come near the snow, than the white flakes leaped into flame as though they had been made of tow, while all the clearing was illumined by the merry light.

From this moment the wood-chopper, although he still continued to be hungry, no longer suffered from the cold; for no sooner did he feel the slightest shiver than he gathered up a heap of snow, whether in his hut or on the road, touched it with his wand, and warmed himself at this strange fireside.

Several days after this adventure there was a great to-do in the capital of the kingdom. The court of the King's palace was filled with halberdiers, who clanged their pikes upon the pavement; and everywhere there was excitement and agitation. It was in the throne-room, however, that this bustle was at its height; for there the most powerful Princes of the earth were gathered to engage in a struggle of courtesy as to who should conquer Snowheart.

First came the nephew of the Emperor of Trebizonde, and bent the knee.

“I command more armed men,” said he, “than there are leaves in all the forests; and in my coffers there are more pearls than there are stars in the sky. Will you, O Princess, reign over my people, and adorn yourself with my pearls?”

“What is it he says?” asked the Princess, pettishly; and that was all the notice she took of him.

Next came the son of the King of Mataquin, and knelt before her.

“Young as I am,” said he, “I have already conquered the most powerful knights in tourney, and with a single stroke of my sword I have cut off the hundred heads of a dragon which devoured all the new-born babes and maidens of my kingdom. O Princess, will you share my glory, which with you will grow yet brighter?”

“He has spoken so low,” said the Princess, yawning, “that I really don’t know what he has talked about.”

Then came other Princes boasting of their power, their riches, and their glory. Following these came poets with tender words sung to a sweet accompaniment upon the guitar, knights who had fought in perilous fights to preserve fair women, and pages almost as beautiful as the Princess herself.

“What do all these people want?” asked Snowheart, crossly. “I wish somebody would ask them to leave. Their chatter wearies me; and I long to be alone, that I may admire myself in the mirror.”

“Ah! little one, little one,” said the nurse, “be careful you do not irritate the good fairies.”

At this moment there advanced a miserable lout, hideous in face, crooked in person, and limping beneath the weight of an enormous hump. The courtiers, who were at the foot of the throne, stepped forward to drive him away; but he con-

tinued to draw nearer, and with the end of a sprig of wild bean he touched the cold bosom of Snowheart. At the touch the Princess instantly started to her feet.

“ I love him, I love him ! ” she cried, as she felt her heart take fire and melt in tenderness.

You can easily imagine the excitement that followed. But the King, for once, kept his word, and allowed his daughter to follow the hideous wood-chopper to the withered forest. There they lived most unhappily together, for her love did not blind her so much that she could not see how unworthy was the wretched creature who had warmed her heart at last.

And this was the punishment of Snowheart.

THE FATAL WISH

THE FATAL WISH.



WITH bare feet and with hair floating in the wind, a beggar-lad passed along the road before the King's palace. Beggar though he was, he was very handsome, with golden curls, big black eyes, and mouth as fresh as a rose after rain. The sun seemed to take a particular pleasure in looking at him; and there was really more light and brightness round about his rags than lay upon the satins, velvets, and brocades of the gentlemen and noble ladies lounging in the court of honor.

"Oh, how lovely she is!" exclaimed the beggar, suddenly stopping.

He had seen the Princess Rosalind, who was sitting at her window; and, truly, it was impossible to find anything more lovely than she was. Motionless, with his arms raised towards the window, as though towards an opening in the sky through which he caught a glimpse of paradise, the beggar would have remained thus until evening if a guard had not chased him away with the butt of a halberd and with hard words.

He went away, holding down his head. It seemed to him that now everything was gloomy before him and around him,—the horizon dark and the trees but shadows. Unable to see Rosalind, he believed the sun was dead. Sitting down under an oak at the edge of a wood, he began to cry.

"Well, well, young fellow, why are you sorrowing in this fashion?" asked an old woman wood-picker, who just then

came out of the wood, her back bent beneath a fagot of dried sticks.

“What good would it be to tell you?” said he. “You can do nothing for me, my poor woman.”

“Perhaps you are mistaken about that,” said the crone.

While speaking, she straightened herself up, and threw away her burden. She was no longer a wood-picker, but a fairy, beautiful as the day, dressed in a robe of silver lace, and with her hair garlanded with precious stones. As to the dead branches, immediately she threw them away they took flight, covering themselves with green leaves, and returning to the trees from which they had fallen; while the birds sang for joy to welcome the branches back.

“O my Lady Fairy,” cried the beggar-lad, falling on his knees, “take pity on my misfortune. Since I saw the Princess at the window, my heart no longer belongs to me; and I feel that I shall never, never love any one but her.”

“Well,” said the fairy, “there is no great misfortune in that.”

“Ah!” cried he: “could there be a greater for me? Do you understand that I shall die if I do not marry the Princess?”

“Well, what is to hinder you from marrying her?” said the fairy. “She is not engaged, I believe.”

“O madame, look at my rags, see my bare feet. I am but a poor fellow who begs upon the road.”

“That does not matter,” said the fairy. “Nothing can hinder one from being loved, who loves sincerely. Such is the sweet and eternal law of life. The King and Queen will repulse you with disdain, and the courtiers will ridicule you; but, if your love for the Princess is true, she will be touched by it, and will give you her pity.”

The young fellow shook his head. He could not believe that such a miracle was possible.



"Take care," said the fairy, "or your want of faith will be punished in a way that will be anything but pleasant. However, as you are suffering, I am willing to come to your aid. Make a wish, and I will grant it."

"I wish," replied the youth, promptly, "to be the most powerful Prince on earth, so that I may marry the Princess whom I adore."

"Dear me, dear me!" said the fairy. "Why don't you go instead, and sing a love-song underneath her window, and not trouble yourself with the cares which your wish will bring you? But, since I have promised, it shall be as you desire. Let me, however, first warn you of one thing. When you have ceased to be what you are now, no enchanter, no fairy, not even myself, will be able to restore you to your first condition. Once become a Prince, and you will remain a Prince forever."

"Do you think," answered the youth, "that the royal husband of the Princess Rosalind will ever wish to be again a beggar upon the highway?"

"Well, I only hope you may be happy," said the fairy, with a sigh.

Then with a golden wand she touched him upon the shoulder; and in the twinkling of an eye the beggar became a magnificent lord, glittering in silks and jewels, riding upon an Arabian courser at the head of a train of plumed courtiers and a throng of warriors in golden armor.

A Prince of such magnificence could only be received at the King's court in one way. He was welcomed with fuss and bustle; and for a whole week there were feastings, balls, and fêtes of every conceivable kind in his honor.

But it was not in these pleasures that the Prince was occupied. At every hour of the day and night he thought of Rosalind. When he saw her, he felt his heart bound with joy.

When he heard her speak, he thought he was listening to faultless music; and he almost fainted with delight when she gave him her hand to dance a minuet.

But one thing worried him somewhat. She whom he loved seemed to pay but little heed to all his attentions. She remained silent, and went about with a melancholy air.

At length he asked the royal parents for their daughter's hand in marriage; and, as may be supposed, they took care not to refuse so splendid an offer. So the beggar of a little while ago was going to possess the loveliest Princess in the world, and so extraordinary was his happiness on receiving the parents' consent that he felt as though he could have danced the minuet by himself before all the court.

Alas! his joy was but short-lived. No sooner was Rosalind told of her parents' wishes than she fell in a swoon in the arms of her ladies of honor; and, when she came to herself, it was to say, with tears and with wringing of hands, that she did not wish to marry, and that she would kill herself before she became the wife of the Prince.

More in despair than can well be described, the unhappy Prince ran into the room to which the Princess had been carried, and fell on his knees before her.

"Cruel one," he cried, "take back your words!"

She slowly opened her eyes, and replied weakly, but firmly:—

"Prince, nothing can break down my resolution. I shall never marry you."

"What!" he cried: "have you the barbarity to wound a heart that is all yours? What crime have I committed to deserve such a punishment? Do you doubt my love? Do you fear that I shall ever cease to worship you? Ah! if you could read my inmost thoughts, you would have neither those doubts nor fears."

He did not stop there, but said everything which a great grief could inspire, and said it so well that Rosalind was moved to tenderness, but not of the kind that he wished.

“Unhappy Prince,” she said, “if my pity is any consolation to you, I willingly accord it. I am, moreover, the readier to sympathize with you because I feel just the same sort of pain and sorrow that you do.”

“What do you mean, Princess?” he asked in wonder.

“I mean,” she replied, “that I refused you because I am hopelessly in love with a beggar-lad, who, with bare feet and uncovered head, passed one day before my father’s castle, who stood to look at me, but who went away, and has never come back again.”

A POOR DIET

A POOR DIET.



THERE was great distress at the court and throughout the kingdom because for four days the King's son had taken nothing to eat. If he had had a fever, or some other malady, no one would have been surprised at this long fast; but all the doctors agreed in saying that the Prince was as well as possible except for the weakness caused by going so long without food.

But why should he thus deprive himself of food? Nothing else was talked of by the courtiers, and even by the common people, who, instead of saying "Good-day" to each other, inquired, "Has he eaten this morning?"

No one, however, was as anxious as the King. This was not because he felt any remarkable affection for his son, for the young man had caused him a great deal of discontent. Although more than sixteen years old, the Prince showed the greatest dislike for both politics and arms. When he assisted at the Council of the Ministers, he yawned during the finest speeches in a very impolite way; and once, when sent out at the head of an army to chastise a horde of rebels, he had returned before evening with a sword garlanded with morning-glories, and with his soldiers bearing handfuls of violets and honeysuckles, giving as a reason that he had found a lovely wooded dell on the way, and that it is much more amusing to pick flowers than to kill men. He loved to walk alone beneath the trees of the royal park, and found it a pleasure to listen to the songs of the nightingales when the moon rose. The few people

whom he allowed to enter his apartments told the others that they had seen there books spread out all over the carpet, with instruments of music, psalteries, and mandolins, and that at night he passed long hours gazing with moist eyes at the stars. Add to this that he was pale and slight as a young girl, and that instead of wearing armor he clothed himself in garments of clear silk, and you can understand why the King was out of countenance in having such a son.

But, as the Prince was the sole heir to the crown, his health was of great consequence to the State; and it was necessary that everything possible should be done to keep him from dying of hunger. He was entreated, he was supplicated, to eat; but he only shook his head without replying. Cooks of splendid skill brought him the most tempting dishes. The most appetizing fish, the most savory meats, the most delicate early vegetables, salmon, trout, haunches of vension, bears' paws, heads of suckling wild boars, hares, pheasants, grouse, quail, snipe, all loaded the table at each meal. Then, thinking him tired of ordinary meats and common vegetables, they brought him filets of bison, loins of Chinese dogs, dressed with swallows' nests, brochets of humming-birds, slices of grilled monkeys and young shoots of pimpernel, cooked in antelope fat. But the young Prince made signs that he was not hungry, and motioned the servants away with a slight gesture of weariness.

Things had arrived at this pass, and the King was almost in despair, when the youth, scarcely able to hold himself up, and whiter than a lily, spoke as follows: —

“Father, if you do not wish to see me die, give me leave to quit your kingdom, and to go wherever I think fit, and without being accompanied by a single person.”

“Why,” replied the King, “in your feeble state, you would faint before taking the third step, my son.”

“It is to recover my strength that I wish to leave here,”



the Prince replied. "Have you ever read the story of Thibaut, the Rhymer, who was made prisoner by the fairies?"

"It is not my custom to read anything," said his father, very haughtily. "I am a King, and I don't read."

"Let me tell you, then," said the son, "that, while with the fairies, Thibaut lived a happy, happy life, and that he was above all things delighted when the hours for meals came, as then little pages, who were really gnomes, served him, for soup, a drop of dew upon an acacia leaf; for roast, a butterfly's wing, broiled in a ray of sunshine; and, for desert, a bee's kiss upon the petals of a rose."

"A pretty thin dinner," said the King, who could not resist smiling, notwithstanding his cares.

"It is the only one, though," replied his son, "that I wish for. I can't eat the flesh of killed animals or vegetables nourished in mud, the same as other fellows. Allow me, please, to go to the fairies; and, if they invite me to their repast, I shall eat, satisfy my hunger, and then return, full of health."

What would you have done, had you been in the King's place? What the King did was that, seeing his only son already on the point of dying, he thought it best to humor him; and so let him go.

Now, the kingdom being near the forest of Broceliande, the youth had not far to go in order to reach the fairies' home. They received him with right hearty welcome,—not, however, because he was a son of a powerful monarch, but because he had found pleasure in listening to the nightingale's song when the moon rose, and in leaning on the window-sill, watching the distant stars. A fête was given in his honor in a vast hall, having walls of rose marble, lit up with diamonds; while, to please him, the loveliest fairies danced a scarf dance in a circle. This so charmed the young man that, though he suffered the cruel pains of hunger, he wished the dance might last forever.

However, he grew feebler, and still more feeble; and he felt that, unless he took some nourishment, he would soon die. He confided his condition to one of the fairies and even dared to ask at what hour they supped.

“Why, whenever you please,” said the fairy.

She at once gave an order, when a little gnome brought the Prince for his soup a drop of dew upon an acacia leaf.

“What splendid soup!” said the Prince, and declared he could not imagine anything more delicious.

Next, for the roast, another gnome brought him a butterfly’s wing grilled in the sun, and served on a thorn by way of a skewer. This he ate with delight at a single swallow. But what most charmed the Prince was the desert, which was the trace of a bee’s kiss upon a rose-leaf.

“Well,” asked the fairy, “are you satisfied?”

He nodded his head to answer yes; but his head fell further forward, and the poor Prince died of weakness.

THE MONEY-BOX

THE MONEY-BOX.



ONCE upon a time there was a poor beggar-girl named Jocelyne. She begged upon a road along which no one passed, so that no alms ever fell into the small, thin hand which grew tired from being held out so long. Now and then the leaves of some fading flower were strewn upon her from a branch shaken by the wind; and, occasionally, too, a swallow, flitting by on noiseless wings, gave her a little chirp. But these offerings, the only ones she received, were not of that sort which we need to buy things to eat and drink or for clothes to wear, as Jocelyne well knew, to her sorrow.

Her lot was, indeed, a hard one. She was born she did not know where or when, her first recollection being that of awakening one sunny morning under a bush by the roadside. Her life had never been like that of other young girls, who each winter's evening returned to the cheerful cottage, around which was the smell of a good meal being cooked; who held up their foreheads at night for a kiss from father and mother; and who then slept in a warm bed, facing the fire, which soon blinked, and went to sleep also. What Jocelyne had to do each evening, as soon as the dark came on, was to climb into some big elm or oak tree, and sleep upon a branch, near the squirrels, who knew her so well that they leaped about her arms, shoulders, and head, and played with their little paws in her tangled hair, which was of the color of gold, and was so bright that it gleamed in the darkness of the branches, like

a light set down in a big room. When the nights were chill, she would willingly have curled herself up in some blackbird or finch's nest, had she not been too big to get into it.

Her dress was made of an old linen bag, which she had chanced to find one day by the roadside. Each springtime she patched up this with green leaves; and, as she was pretty and sweet-looking, with fresh and blooming cheeks, you would have taken her for a rose set amid its leaves. For food she contented herself with nuts from the wood and berries from the lanes, although now and then she managed to indulge in a grand feast of grasshoppers, toasted before a fire of dried grass. You can see, can't you, that Jocelyne was one of the poorest little girls it is possible to imagine; and, if her condition was cruel in the summer,—when there was warmth in the air and fruit upon the trees,—think what it must have been when the cold breeze whistled about the dry nut-trees, and chilled her skin through the thin covering of dead leaves.

One day, just as she had returned from picking a mess of berries, she saw a fairy, dressed in tissue of gold, coming out of a flowery thicket.

“Jocelyne,” said the fairy, in a sweet and musical voice, “because your heart is as good as your face is charming, I am going to make you a present. You see this little money-box, of the color and shape of an opening pink: it is yours. Don't fail to put into it everything that you have or that you ever get that is most precious; and, when you break it, it will give back to you one hundred-fold what it has received.”

Thereupon the fairy vanished like a flame blown out by a gust of wind; and Jocelyne, who had indulged in a momentary hope of relief, on seeing the fairy, felt sadder than ever.

“That could *not* have been a good fairy,” she said; “for what could be more cruel than to give a money-box to a poor girl who has neither a cent nor a stitch to her name? What can I put in it if I have nothing to call my own?”



At first she was tempted to smash the present among the rocks; but she thought better of this, and then, feeling very sad, she began to cry, her tears falling, one by one, into the poor little money-box, which now looked like a full-blown pink, and which was no bigger.

Another day she experienced a pleasure which, after it had passed, left her still more unhappy than ever. Along this road, on which no one had heretofore passed, there happened to come the King's son on his return from a hunt. Mounted on a horse, which shook its snow-white mane at each step, with a falcon on his wrist, clad in blue satin, shot with silver, and with a proud and sunny face, the Prince looked so beautiful that the poor beggar-girl thought he must surely be an angel in the dress of a nobleman. With staring eyes and open mouth she stretched out her arms towards him; and, as she did so, she felt something, which seemed to be her heart, go out of her, and follow him.

Alas! he passed by without even having seen her. Alone as before, more so, indeed, from having one brief instant ceased to be so, she dropped helplessly into the ditch by which she had stood, closing her eyes tightly, so that nothing should replace the charming vision she had just seen. When she opened them, all wet with tears, she saw beside her the poor little money-box. Seizing it, as the only companion of her misery, she kissed it with fervor; but the fairy's present was no more moved by this gentle sad caress than a stone would be if brushed by a rose.

From this day on Jocelyne experienced such grief that nothing she had hitherto endured could be compared with it. She recalled, as though they had been happy hours, those times when she had only suffered from hunger and cold. To

go to sleep in the chilling wind was nothing to this. Now she knew what real sorrow was. She thought of other girls, of the fine ladies at the court,—“Less pretty than you,” said the mirror of the stream. Each hour she could see the handsome Prince with his bright face. She pictured him approaching these fine ladies, walking with this one, smiling with that, and then as being married to some glorious young Princess come from Trebizonde in a litter carried by a white elephant with a gilded trunk. She, however, the poor beggar-girl of the deserted road,—she would continue to live in the same loneliness, in the same misery, far away from him whom she loved so tenderly; and she would never, never, *never*, see him again.

Still, there was no anger in her grief, and her bitterest pain was to think that possibly the King's son would not be as tenderly loved by the Princess of Trebizonde as he was by her.

At last, one bitter, snowy day, she resolved to end her suffering. She felt that she could no longer endure all her misery, and decided to throw herself into the lake which stood in the middle of the forest. So accustomed was she to the icy air that she was sure she would not feel the coldness of the water. Shivering, she started for the lake as fast as she could. It was one of those gray mornings when the air was thick with snowflakes and when the sky is covered by lead-colored clouds. Amidst all the sad surrounding of the whitened earth, the bare trees, and the mournful-looking hills in the distance, nothing seemed bright except her golden hair; and one would have said that even on this dull morning a little glimpse of sunshine rested there. She walked quicker and quicker; but, when she reached the edge of the lake, her rags were covered with snow, so that she looked as though adorned in the white robe of a bride.

“Good-by,” she cried, her last thought being of the Prince.

Just, however, as she was about to throw herself into the water, the same fairy, clad in a long golden veil, came out from the branches of a thicket.

“Jocelyne,” asked the fairy, “what are you going to do?”

“I’m going to drown myself,” she replied.

“And why do you wish to die?” asked the sprite.

“You know well enough, wicked fairy,” answered the poor girl, “that I am unhappy. The most wretched death would be sweeter to me than life.”

But the fairy only laughed,—a pleasant little laugh.

“Before drowning yourself,” said she, “you ought, at least, to break that money-box.”

“Of what use would that be,” said Jocelyne, “since, being so poor as I am, I have had nothing to put into it?”

“Well, break it just the same,” said the fairy.

Jocelyne hardly dared to disobey; and then, having drawn the useless little present from underneath her rags, she broke it against a stone.

Immediately the wintry forest turned into a magnificent palace of marble with a blue roof studded with golden stars; while the handsome Prince appeared from the fragments of the money-box, took the beggar-girl in his arms, and kissed her right royally. Then, while Jocelyne wept with joy, he asked her if she would be his bride.

So that the good little money-box did, indeed, give back a hundred-fold; for it changed her sorrowful kiss into the Prince’s caress, and it turned her tears of sadness into those of joy.

A WONDERFUL ATTRACTION

A WONDERFUL ATTRACTION.



WHEN the Princess Othilde was born, people were struck with admiration and astonishment,— with admiration, because she was the sweetest little darling that you could ever dream of; with astonishment, because she was scarcely any larger than a full-blown rose, or longer than your finger. Lying in a cradle no bigger than your hand, you would have said she was a little featherless bird in its nest. The King and Queen were never tired of admiring the baby's tiny limbs; her pink feet, which you might have put into a doll's stocking; her little body, like a white mouse; or her face, which you might have covered with a daisy. To be sure, they were somewhat troubled to see her so very, very, *very* small, and would not believe that their little daughter was a dwarf. What they hoped was that she would grow, and grow without losing her cunningness.

They were very much deceived in their expectations, however. She remained cunning and sweet as ever, but she grew so very little that, when she was five years old, she was scarcely higher than a good-sized blade of grass; and, in playing in the garden paths, she was obliged to stand on tiptoe to pluck the violets. Famous doctors were brought to the palace, and were promised the richest rewards if they succeeded in even adding a few inches to the height of the Princess. They consulted together with gravity, crossing their hands over their stomachs and shutting their eyes behind their spectacles. They

invented medicines, which Othilde was obliged to drink, and unfailing ointments, with which she was to be rubbed every morning and evening. All was labor lost. The Princess remained a charming dwarf, so small that, when she was playing with a favorite lap-dog, she could pass between its paws without having to bend her head.

The King and Queen then sought the fairies, with whom they had always been on excellent terms. They came at once,—some in litters of golden cloth, with fringes of precious stones, carried by naked Africans; others in crystal cars, drawn by four unicorns; some, who found it more convenient to come in by the window or the chimney, appeared as birds of paradise or blue-winged jays, but who, directly they alighted on the floor of the drawing-room, turned into lovely ladies all clothed in satin. One after the other they touched Othilde with their wands, took her in their hands,—she was no heavier than a lark,—kissed her, breathed on her hair, and made signs on her forehead, while they murmured strange words. But the charms of the fairies had no more effect than the medicines of the doctors; and at sixteen the Princess was so small that one morning she was caught in a trap that had been set in the park for nightingales.

The courtiers did their best to console the royal parents. They declared that nothing was more ridiculous than a large figure; that to be tall was simply to be deformed; and that, as for them, they wished they were only six inches high. The ladies of honor gave up their high heels, and the chamberlains never came near the throne except on their knees. But the ingenious flatterers did not always succeed in consoling the King and Queen, and many times the parents could scarcely keep from crying as they kissed their little daughter with the tips of their lips for fear of swallowing her. But they kept back their tears, so that she might not be drowned in them.



As for Othilde, she did not appear at all put out by her misfortune, and indeed seemed to take great pleasure in admiring her pretty little person in a hand mirror cut from a single diamond.

As time went on, however, the King and Queen grew less sad, and there is not much doubt that the time would have arrived when they would not have grieved at all over their daughter's misfortune if something had not occurred to renew their sorrow. The report of the Princess Othilde's beauty reached the young Emperor of Sirinagon, and he thereupon sent ambassadors asking her in marriage. You may easily understand the trouble which was caused by this proposal. What, marry this little doll, no bigger than a paroquet! Why, it was not to be thought of!

Then, too, the demand of the Emperor of Sirinagon was all the more dreadful, because he was of an enormous figure. He was not only the handsomest of Princes, he was also the biggest giant of the whole countryside. On the day of his birth it had been impossible to find a cradle big enough for the enormous baby Prince, and he was put to bed on the thick carpets of the throne-room. At three years of age he had to stoop to steal the birds'-nests from the top branches of the oak-trees. His parents, like those of Othilde, had vainly consulted the doctors and fairies. He had grown and grown after a fashion that was out of all reason; and when his subjects, in celebrating his first victory, had put up arches of triumph over the streets, the Prince was obliged to get off his horse to pass under them. And even then he struck the silver dragon on his helmet, and nearly knocked it off.

Naturally, the King and Queen informed the ambassadors that such a marriage was impossible. But, when the young Emperor heard this reply, he was furious. The story of

Othilde's littleness he declared to be an absurd story; and he clapped on his helmet with its shining silver wings, crying out that he would sweep the kingdom with fire and blood to avenge such a trick.

The young Emperor kept his word. There were terrible battles. Towns were destroyed and their entire population put to the edge of the sword. So that at last the King and Queen came to the conclusion that nothing would be left of their kingdom unless they came to terms with the gigantic conqueror, who was marching towards the capital, leaving behind him a train of cities wrecked and forests in flame. They therefore sent to him, asking for peace and promising the hand of their daughter in marriage. They did this the more readily because they were confident that the Emperor would give up his idea as soon as he saw Othilde, and march back to his own country with his victorious army.

The day was then set for the first interview, which was held in the park, the Emperor not being able to stand up in any of the halls of the palace.

"Well," said the Emperor, "I don't see the Princess. Will she soon come?"

"Look down at your feet," said the King.

There she was indeed, scarcely higher than the borders of the garden-walk, so slender and so pretty in her little golden robe with glistening stones about her forehead, and looking so much the smaller beside the young and magnificent Emperor.

"Alas!" said he; for he was grieved indeed to see her down there, so charming, but so small.

"Alas!" said she in her turn; for she was grieved indeed to see him up there, so beautiful, but so big.

Tears came into the eyes of both,—into hers as she looked up, and into his as he looked down.

“Sire,” then said the King, “you see that you cannot possibly marry my daughter. I am grieved, I am sure, to have to give up the honor”—

He did not finish his sentence, and mute with astonishment he stood staring at the Princess and the Emperor. As he looked, she began to grow and the young Emperor to shrink; for Love, more powerful than the fairies, drew them one to the other. Soon they were nearly of the same height; and then their lips touched, like two roses on the same stem.

THE LAME ANGEL

THE LAME ANGEL.



ONE summer's morning the son of the King of the Pale Islands was walking in the snow; for in that country it snows even in high summer, the flakes coming down in full view of a warm sun, and turning, as they fall, into jasmine blossoms and lilies. While thus walking, the Prince saw on the ground before him something glittering like pure silver, and trembling gently like a harp-string just touched by the fingers of a musician. If it had been smaller, this glittering, trembling thing might have been a dove's wing, covered with pearls of dew; but, being as large as it was, and with the tips of its feathers still tinged with the lovely blue it had doubtless gained in sweeping through the skies, it could be nothing else than an angel's wing.

On seeing it, the Prince became very sad. "Here," he thought, "is a pinion that has been wrenched from some divine messenger. Perhaps it has been lost in a battle with some dark spirit, perhaps it has been blown off in some gust from the Underworld, or perhaps it has been cut from him as a punishment for some crime committed against the rulers of heaven. Whatever may have been the cause, there is no doubt the poor angel must be in great trouble over his loss. No longer could he fly with the rest of his brothers, being now unbalanced and lame.

"For, surely," the Prince went on thinking, "he must be lame, since angels are not bodily creatures, but are simply souls

with wings, and therefore could not be lame of foot, but must be lame of wing."

In thinking of this probable grief of the unfortunate angel, the Prince of the Pale Islands felt his compassion much moved; and he resolved to give back the wing to the angel who had lost it.

But this was a plan more easily formed than carried out. The chief difficulty was how to find the suffering angel. Paradise is not a place where one can come and go as one might wish. Nor would it do to placard the city walls in all the kingdom, announcing that, if any cherub or seraph had lost a precious object, he might recover the same by applying at the palace of the King; for angels are not in the habit of walking up and down streets, like human loungers.

On thinking of these and of many other things, the young Prince was sore perplexed; and he decided that the best thing he could do was to consult with a little sweetheart of his who lived in the forest. Tucking the wing under his arm, he forthwith went to see her; and, as chance would have it, he met her at the very border of the wood, apparently walking to meet him.

"Ah! little one," said he, "I bring you sad news."

"What is it?" she asked anxiously.

"See," he said, "what I have found. An angel has lost one of his white wings."

She blushed, but did not seem surprised. You would almost have said, in fact, that she was already aware of the unfortunate accident; and when he added, "I have resolved to give it back to him," she lowered her eyes and blushed the deeper.

"Now, then, sweetheart," said he, "you are the only one that I know of who can tell me just how to manage this. You



are so pretty and so innocent that the celestial spirits meet each day in your thoughts and lodge each night in your dreams. It seems to me impossible that, while listening to them both day and night, as you surely must, you have not heard them speak of what has happened to one of them."

"Alas!" said she, "I already know as much of the accident as I possibly can; for it is none other than my Guardian Angel who has thus lost one of his wings."

"What," cried the Prince, "your Guardian Angel? What a singular coincidence! But tell me, please, how this unfortunate loss came about?"

"It was by your fault, I assure you," said the little maiden. "Do you remember that walk we took the other evening under the orange-trees,—that evening, I mean, when we thought that the stars looked like golden fruit?"

"Remember it?" cried the Prince. "How do you think I can ever forget it? It was on that evening that you allowed me, for the first time, to kiss you, since when, by the way, my mouth has been perfumed as though I had eaten roses."

"Yes," replied she, "it was on that evening you kissed me; but, while to me and to you that kiss might have been sweet, it was cruel to the angel who followed me among the orange branches. At the very moment that you kissed me, one of his wings fell from him."

"And why?" asked the Prince, in amazement.

"Because," answered his sweetheart, "the law among the Guardian Angels is that they must be the first to suffer for any errors or mistakes or indiscretions committed by those over whom it is their duty to watch."

"What an unjust law," said the Prince, "and how your poor maimed angel must have suffered!"

"More than you can imagine," she replied. "Ashamed and hurt, unable to return to the skies, even if he dared to,

he does nothing but weep and sigh. As for me, I can scarcely sleep at night, however greatly I might wish to dream of you, so much do his lamentations keep me from closing my eyes."

"Very well, then," exclaimed the Prince: "nothing remains but for us to give him back his wing. I do not see how I can repent for what I have done, but I would willingly find out any way by which the fault might be repaired."

"I think there is one such way," said she.

"Let me know it at once, then," he cried.

"What we must do," she said,—and she spoke so low that he could scarcely hear her,—“what we must do is to restore things to the exact condition in which they were before we took that walk under the orange-trees. My Guardian Angel lost his wing because I received your kiss. He would regain his wing, no doubt, if” —

"If what?" exclaimed the Prince.

"If," she whispered, "if I gave back the kiss to you."

And so she did; and, as she did so, there was a movement in the branches behind them. It was the angel who flew upward, joyfully flapping his wings. Only, those two wings which had been white were now rose-color.

THE TWO DAISIES

THE TWO DAISIES.



LAMBERT and Landry resolved to start out into the world to seek their fortunes. They were, in fact, obliged to, their parents being very poor people, and quite unable to offer them any promise of better days. So, early one spring morning the two youths set out on their way.

Landry was but fifteen years old, while Lambert had just turned sixteen. They were, therefore, very young to thus throw themselves on Fate's unsteady care; and, while they had much hope, they also felt some little anxiety as to the future. But, as it happened, they were strangely comforted by an adventure which came about almost at the beginning of their journey.

It was in this wise:—

As they passed by the edge of a little wood, who should come out to meet them but a lady,—a lady decked with flowers from top to toe. Golden-cups and pimpernels were in her hair; her gown was trimmed with convolvulus blossoms, and fell down to two tiny slippers of moss, which looked like green velvet; while her eyes were like two blue cornflowers. It was the fairy Springtime, whom you may sometimes see and hear about April, tripping and singing across the flowering meadows and through the budding woods.

Stopping the youths, she said:—

“I have been watching you; and, as you are about to start out on a long journey, I am going to make each of you a pres-

ent. Here, Landry, take this daisy; and to you, Lambert, I give a daisy also. All you will need at any time is to pluck one of the petals of these flowers, and throw the leaf from you, in order to secure that which you most ardently wish for. Now go, and try to make good use of Springtime's presents."

The youths thanked the fairy with all the politeness at their command, and then, with light hearts, set out on their way once more; but scarcely had they arrived at the cross-roads than a disagreement sprang up between them. Lambert wished to turn to the right, Landry to the left, when, to settle the dispute, they decided that each should go as he pleased, and so separated with an affectionate shake of the hands. Perhaps, after all, each brother was not particularly disappointed at being alone, in order that he might the more freely dispose of the present made him by the flower-clad fairy.

On entering the first village he came to, Landry saw a young girl leaning from a window, at sight of whom he started with pleasure. Never had he seen so lovely a creature. Never, in fact, had he dreamed that any such existed. Still little more than a child, with hair so fine and so blond that one could scarce distinguish it from the sunny air about her, her face was delicately pink and white,—a lily as to the forehead and a rose as to the cheeks,—her eyes were like a bed of violets in which a few raindrops lingered, and you had only to look at her mouth to wish that you were a bee. Landry did not hesitate long. He tore off and threw away the first of the daisy's petals; and the wind had scarcely taken up the frail leaf before the girl had smiled at him from the window, and the next instant had run down and placed her hand in his.

Landry soon grew tired of his pretty playmate, but each leaf brought him another. Indeed, his only aim in life was to find a way of tasting all of its pleasures. Whatever he saw he



longed for, and whatever he longed for he had. Each day, each hour, in fact, the daisy lost one of its petals; and the breeze could scarcely find time to stir the branches of the rose-trees, so much was it occupied in wafting about the leaves of the fairy's gift.

Brother Lambert adopted an entirely different plan. He was a saving young man, one for whom it would be impossible to waste a treasure. As soon as he found himself alone on the road, he decided to carefully treasure the fairy's gift; for (so he reasoned with himself), no matter how numerous the daisy's leaves then might be, if he were to tear one off for every whim and wish, the day would soon come in which there would be no more leaves to pluck. He decided therefore to prudently reserve the wonderful flower until some future time. So, when he reached the next town, he bought a little box, very solid and fastening with a well-made lock. In this box he placed the daisy, resolving never to look at it, so that it might be out of temptation's way.

Sensible, methodical, and troubling himself only about serious matters, Lambert became a merchant, and soon amassed large sums of money. He had nothing but contempt for those neglectful people who passed their time in feasting and frolics, caring nothing for the morrow; nor did he ever fail to preach good round sermons to such triflers, whenever the opportunity offered. So it came about that he was looked up to by all honest folk, and that his life was spoken of as an example for all to follow.

He continued to grow respected and rich, working from early morn till late at night, and each day rolling up his wealth; but, truth to tell, he was not so happy as he had hoped to be. He could not help thinking of those pleasures which he so persistently denied himself. Yet he had but to open the

little box and throw a petal to the wind to have as many pleasures as his brother had enjoyed. But he steadfastly turned away from such dangerous thoughts, and decided to wait. There was plenty of time, he said. He would enjoy himself when he was older and more settled.

The breeze, while whisking by him, whispered: "Come, throw me a leaf. Throw me just one, so that I may bring you at least one pleasurable day, and that I may see you smile for once."

But he turned a deaf ear to the entreaty, and the breeze went off to stir the branches of the rose-trees.

Now, after many years had passed, it happened one day that Lambert, while visiting one of his country properties, chanced to meet a ragged man, making his way across a clover field.

"Well! well!" exclaimed he, throwing up his hands: "are you not my brother Landry?"

"I am certainly he," replied the other.

"Why, what a wretched state you are in!" said Lambert. "I am sadly afraid that you have made but poor use of the fairy Springtime's gift."

"Well," said Landry, "I did, perhaps, throw away the petals too quickly. Still, though I am now but badly off, I do not repent of my youthful thoughtlessness. Ah! brother Lambert, I may have been wasteful, but I was very happy as long as the flower lasted."

"Pooh! pooh!" said Lambert: "there is little comfort in that fact for your present condition. Now just look at me. Here I am rich and prosperous, yet I have but to make a single move to enjoy all the pleasures which you have wasted."

"Is that possible?" said Landry.

"It is," replied his rich brother, "because I have kept the

fairy's present intact. Ah! ha!" he went on: "I can still have all the good times that I wish, when I wish. So much for being economical. Come," he added, "and I will show you my untouched flower."

They soon reached the place where Lambert kept his treasure; and, selecting a small key from a big bunch, he opened the tiny box.

"There," he exclaimed with an air of triumph, "see how I have kept my flower."

But he suddenly turned pale, and staggered back; for, instead of the fresh-blooming daisy, which he had locked away so many years ago, there was now nothing before his eyes but a little heap of gray dust, like a pinch of ashes.

"Ah! cursed fairy," he cried, "you have played me a wretched trick, indeed!"

As he said this, the fairy Springtime herself stood before them.

"I have played you no trick," she said,— "neither you nor your brother. Those two daisies were not real flowers. They were your youth,—your youth, Landry, which you passed in the pursuit of caprice and pleasure; your youth, Lambert, which you have allowed to wither and fade without ever having enjoyed or valued it at all. Landry, it is true, wasted his youth by recklessly plucking off and throwing away its many chances; but you, Lambert, have not even the remembrance of having had any youth at all."

THE DEAR DEPARTED

THE DEAR DEPARTED.



THE whole kingdom was plunged in grief, the reason being that, since the young King had become a widower, he no longer occupied himself with anything concerning the state, but passed his days and nights weeping before a portrait of the "dear departed." This portrait was his own work, the King having learned to paint expressly for the purpose of reproducing her face; and it was now his only consolation. He never could keep back his tears when looking at the picture; but he would not have exchanged the bitterness of these tears for the happiest smiles.

In vain his cabinet ministers said to him:—

"Sire, we have received disquieting news. The new King of Ormuz is raising a numberless army to invade your estates."

He made believe not to have heard them, and remained with his eyes fixed upon the beloved image.

One day he became so angry with one of his chamberlains that he almost killed him, the poor courtier having ventured to hint that grief, however sharp and real, should not last forever, and that his royal master would do well to think of marrying some young girl, no matter whether she might be the niece of an Emperor or the daughter of a peasant.

"Monster!" cried the inconsolable widower: "how dare you give me such base counsel? You advise me to be unfaithful to the most loving of Queens. Out of my sight, or you shall die by my hand! But, before leaving, learn, and tell every

one the same thing, that no woman shall ever share my throne unless she resembles, in every particular, the treasure whom I have lost."

In saying this, the young King was convinced that he was making an engagement whose conditions could never be met. Even as her picture looked in its frame of gold, the poor dead young Queen appeared so beautiful that nowhere in the world could her equal be found. A brunette, with long hair which flowed down over her shoulders, like liquid ebony; with a high forehead of the color of old ivory; with deep eyes of a midnight blackness; with a full mouth opened in a smile which showed her teeth,—she defied all comparisons or resemblances. Not even a Princess who might have received in her cradle all the most precious gifts of good fairies could have such glorious dark hair, such deep brown eyes, so intelligent a forehead, or so sweet a mouth.

Many months went by—indeed, a whole year passed—without bringing any happy change to this sad state of affairs. The news from Ormuz became more and more alarming, but the King never gave one moment's heed to the approaching danger. It is true that his ministers raised war taxes in his name; but, as they put the money in their own pockets instead of employing it to raise and equip an army, the country suffered all the horrors of war after having paid to be preserved from them. As a consequence, the King's subjects gathered every day, and all the day, about the palace with complaints and petitions; but the young King paid no heed to these, and remained shut up in his melancholy, his only occupation being to seek the silent charm of the portrait of the late Queen.

Now one day it happened that through the window he heard a passing song, a song so fresh and clear, so joyful and full of the morning, that it sounded like the warbling of a lark. He stepped to the window-pane, astonished; pressed his face



against the glass, and looked out. As he did so, he could scarcely keep back a cry of pleasure. Never, he thought, had he seen anything quite so charming as this little shepherdess, driving her flock of sheep out to the fields. She was blond, so blond that her hair seemed to gild the sun rather than to be gilded by it. Her forehead was a trifle low, and tinged with pink, like the young honeysuckle; her blue eyes were as bright as the morning; while her rosebud of a mouth was so small that, even when opened in song, one could see but the tips of two or three little pearls within. The young King, charmed as he was, drew away from the sight, covering his eyes with his hands. Then, ashamed to think that he should have for one instant turned aside from the "dear departed," he went back to the portrait, and knelt before it in tears.

"Ah!" he sobbed: "you know, my treasure, that my mourning heart is yours forever, since no woman lives who in any way resembles you."

Now the next day, while admiring the portrait of the dead Queen, he felt a painful surprise.

"This is very strange," said he: "it must be that this room is damp, and that the air is affecting the painting. I am sure, quite sure," he continued, "that my darling's hair was not so dark as it looks there. It had not anything of that blackness which resembles liquid ebony. I remember perfectly well that there were bright gleams in it here and there."

He ordered his palette and brushes brought, and soon corrected the faults in the portrait which had been caused by the damp air.

"Ah!" he cried, when he had finished these alterations. "There we have the golden hair which I loved so dearly, and which I shall love forever."

Then, full of a bitter-sweet joy, he knelt before the por-

trait, now so like the beloved model, and renewed his vows of eternal constancy.

But, surely, some wicked spirit must have been amusing itself with him; for three days had scarcely passed when he was convinced that the portrait had again undergone other damaging changes. What was the meaning of this? How did it happen that the picture showed him a high forehead, the color of old ivory? He thanked his stars that his memory, at any rate, had not changed; for he recollected perfectly well that the forehead of his dear Queen was rather low, and that there was a blush upon it, like that of the young honeysuckle. Once more the brushes and palette were seized, and with a few strokes he brought the golden hair down over the forehead and gave the temples a light pink tinge. His work completed, he felt his heart grow full of a great tenderness towards the restored picture.

But the next day it was worse still. There was no doubt about it. Both the eyes and mouth of the portrait had been changed by some mysterious power or else by some wretched accident. Never had the "dear departed" such dark eyes as these, nor that wide mouth which showed nearly all the teeth in a smile.

"To the contrary, indeed," cried the young King, "heaven's own morning blue scarcely equalled the azure of those eyes with which she used to look upon me; while, as to her mouth, it was such a rosebud that even when she opened it to sing one could see within but the tips of a few tiny pearls."

The young King's anger rose hot against this absurd portrait which was constantly contradicting his dear recollections, and, if he could only have had in his grasp the miserable

enchanter who had caused these transformations,—for surely there must be some enchantment at work,—he would have been avenged of him in a terrible way. However, in a little while he calmed down, taking some consolation in the fact that the injuries could be undone. He set to work, with the remembrance of the “dear departed” before his mind’s eye; and a few hours later there, upon the canvas, was seen a maiden’s face, with eyes as blue as the coming morning and with a mouth so small that, had it been a flower, it would scarcely have held three dewdrops. Then, as he looked at the new portrait of his Queen, he was filled with a sweet sorrow.

“It is she, it is indeed she,” he sighed.

And so satisfied was he that, when the chamberlain—whose habit it was to peep through the keyhole—advised him to take for a wife a pretty little shepherdess who passed singing each morning before the palace, the young King made no objection, finding her in every respect like the portrait of the “dear departed,” except that, perhaps, she was a little prettier.

LORD ROLAND'S GRIEF

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ONCE upon a time it happened that Lord Roland, while returning from fighting against the Moors, was told a dreadful story by a shepherd. The Knight had halted for a minute in a rocky pass of the Pyrenees to give his horse a rest, and the story told by the shepherd was that not far from where they had met there lived an enchanter who was hated by all the countryside for his cruelty and tyranny. On hearing this, Roland's horse pricked up its ears, shook its mane, and was ready to gallop away; for it knew that, generally speaking, its noble master allowed but little time to pass between hearing of such ill-doers and going to punish them.

But the Knight was particularly patient that day, and asked the shepherd a number of curious questions. In reply he learned many strange things. The wicked magician, he was told, lived in a castle near the sea, and made a daily practice of killing all travellers who passed that way, of laying waste the fields, setting fire to the villages, of murdering the old men and carrying away the children. He had overthrown all the knights and warriors who had sought to put an end to his barbarous practices, and he had caused the bravest of them to bite the dust. Nor were those who wished to escape able to do so. All along in front of the castle, on each side of which rolled in a furious sea, there were enormous heaps of bones gnawed bare by the wild beasts and bleached by the rains; while a huge flock of ravens all the time floated and sailed about the top of the tower, like a black flag.

Roland could not forbear smiling, when he heard of these terrible things. The idea that a wicked sorcerer could have overthrown so many valiant knights, encased as they were in steel and with lance or sword in hand, was simply absurd. Either the shepherd did not know what he was talking about or else those who had defied the magician of the castle were cowards, unworthy the name of knights, or, perhaps, young pages playing at fighting.

“My lord,” said the shepherd, “it is not because of his courage that the enchanter is able to overthrow all his enemies.”

“Why is it, then?” asked Roland.

“It is,” replied the shepherd, “because by his infernal science he has invented a weapon the like of which was never seen before,—a weapon which can kill at a distance without danger to the one using it.”

“What’s that?” inquired Roland, with surprise.

“It is just as I tell you,” replied the shepherd. “He takes good care never to come down into the plain to meet his enemies; for well he knows that, even were his breast covered with bronze, some spear would instantly find entrance there. He keeps himself hidden behind his walls or behind those heaps of bleached bones; and then from this hiding-place there comes a sharp noise, a flame leaps out, and, before one has time to say the shortest prayer, the poor knight falls to the ground with a ghastly wound in his throat or head.”

“Now, by Saint George,” cried the nephew of Charlemagne, “I never yet have heard of such a cowardly way of fighting. Truly, it is fortunate that I have halted in this desert place; for by to-morrow—if the saints lend me their aid and the castle is not too far off—I shall have properly punished this wretch. But tell me frankly what sort of thing is this diabolical weapon?”



“Well,” said the shepherd, “they tell *me* that it is made of a moderately long tube, at one end of which a piece of saltpetre is set fire to; while from the other end there rushes out a little ball of some metal, which cleaves through the air and goes straight to its mark with all the quickness of lightning.”

Roland stayed to hear no more; but gathering the reins together, he gripped the saddle with his knees until the armor creaked, while the horse, with flying mane, went galloping towards the sea.

Roland, however, kept his head bowed down all during the ride. It hurt him to think that he should have to soil his sword with the blood of a coward, and for the first time in his life he went into a fight without pleasure.

The sunset clouds lay red upon the sea when the castle came into view, and one might have believed that the horizon was crimsoned with the blood of all the crimes that had been committed in this terrible place. Roland halted, looking at the horrible habitation towards which a flock of croaking birds was slowly flying. He sought out a path amidst the bones which lay all around, but could find none. So thick and numerous were the human remains that it was impossible to reach the castle without walking on death.

“Ah! noble warriors,” exclaimed Roland, “come here from all parts of the world to meet this miserable enchanter, you who have been cowardly struck down at a distance by a miserable adversary, how I mourn and honor you! And how I suffer to hear your unburied bones being crunched beneath my horse’s hoofs!”

As he thought of these things, a fierce anger arose in his heart; and the duty of avenging his comrades took possession of him, like a fury. With his famous sword, Durandel, firmly grasped in his hand, he spurred on his horse, and galloped

across the bone-strewn plain. As he did so, a flame suddenly shot out from between the stones of the castle, there was a loud noise which rolled and rumbled in echoes amid the hills, while something went whistling by the chevalier's ear. The sorcerer had used his treacherous invention.

But he had not the opportunity to use it a second time. Leaping from his horse, Roland threw himself against the great castle door, which creaked and cracked, and then crashed heavily inward, pulling down a mass of stones and mortar in its fall. Just inside the Knight saw the magician; and, seizing him by the throat, Lord Roland strangled him until he spat out his soul in a curse, and tumbled in a heap on the pavement beside his useless weapon.

Just at this moment the ravens flew away from the castle, while the setting sun illumined the tall tower from dungeon to parapet, as though the black flag had at last been replaced by a golden banner.

Roland smiled at first, as he looked down upon the dead enchanter; but soon the smile faded away, and, pushing the corpse to one side with his foot, he stooped, picked up the wonderful weapon, and examined it. As the shepherd had said, it was a tube with two openings. By one of them death went in, and by the other death came out.

Lord Roland looked at it long and sadly.

When night had quite come, Roland walked to the sea. A boat lay there; and, entering it, he broke the rope, seized the oars in his strong hands, and pulled out to the open sea, while the polished steel of his armor glittered in the starlight with every movement of his body.

Where was he going? What voyage was he thus undertaking in the shadows? Weary of battles, had he determined to rest in one of those miraculous islands where beautiful

fairies employ themselves in fanning sleeping knights with broad green leaves? Or, having heard of some piece of injustice done underneath some far-away sky, had he resolved to go there, and clear the land of lies and meanness with his keen sword?

He had set out to do none of these things. He was simply going to complete the work of the day. The enchanter was dead; and the castle, toppled over, lay in ruins like an enormous monument to the many brave knights who had been so treacherously slain. All this had been done, but it was not enough. This cowardly weapon, by which an enemy could strike from afar, must also be destroyed, must be cast away where no one would ever be able to find it. He had at first decided to break it into fragments; but then he thought that some wicked creature might gather up the pieces, and make another weapon out of these or with these as a model. Then he thought about burying it, but the fear that some one might chance to dig it up again stood in the way of doing this. At last, he came to the conclusion that the surest way to dispose of it was to throw it into the sea, far out, and when the night hid him from every one. And this was why he pulled out towards the open ocean.

When he was a long way from the shore, and when he was certain that he could no longer be seen, when indeed he could see nothing except the dark stretch of sea and sky, he stood up, seized the diabolical weapon in his hands, and then whirled it round, and sent it whizzing into the sea, where it sank out of sight.

But even then he was pensive and sad; and, as he stood balancing himself to the easy movement of the boat, his huge stature showing white beneath the stars, he thought of many things. He thought that some day or other, be the time near or far off, men would surely invent other weapons just like that

which he had been so careful to throw into the sea. He thought of the combats in which he had joyously taken part: of lances broken in the shock of charging steeds; of the clash of swords; of struggles, chest to chest; of red wounds, close to the hands of those who inflicted them. He thought of these things; and then, as in a gloomy vision, he saw a new and strange warfare, where the struggle was carried on from a distance, where those who struck could not see those they struck at, where the most cowardly could kill the bravest, and where chance ruled everything in the midst of smoke and clamor.

Thinking of these things, and looking sadly at his sword, Durandel, Roland wept until the tear-drops fell down, one by one, on the gleaming steel of the blade,— a weapon whose day, like that of knighthood itself, he foresaw, would surely pass away.

THE LAST OF THE FAIRIES

THE LAST OF THE FAIRIES.



SEATED in a carriage made out of the shell of a hazelnut and drawn by four lady-birds, the fairy Oriana — who was no bigger than the nail of your little finger — was one day returning to the forest of Broceliande, where she had long dwelt with her companions and playfellows. She was just getting back from the christening of three young robin redbreasts, which had been celebrated in the cranny of a wall covered over with honey-suckles in flower. The affair had been held in the nest underneath the leaves. The sweet chirpings of the baby-birds as they fluttered their little pink, unfledged wings had given promise that they would one day be excellent singers, the fairy's god-children had behaved themselves excellently, and altogether Oriana had had a very pleasant day of it.

She was consequently in an excellent humor; and — as, when we are happy, we want to make others so, too — she made a point of doing some good service by the way to every person and thing that she met. She slid handfuls of blackberries into the baskets of lads just going to school; she breathed on the buds of the sweetbrier to aid them in opening; and she laid down oaten straws over the dew-drops, so that the little caterpillars might not get drowned in crossing them. And, as one becomes all the happier for doing good, so the fairy Oriana was so full of self-satisfaction that, if she had not been afraid of overturning her carriage, she would have stood up and danced in the nut-shell.

But the hour of her happiness soon came to an end. Alas! what had happened?

She was certain she had followed the right road; yet there where the forest of Broceliande had formerly waved its green depths in the breeze, there now spread nothing but a vast plain, marked here and there with a huge building, while overhead the sky was grimy with black smoke.

“Oh, what *has* become of you, dear green and golden glades?” cried Oriana,—“glades where we used to dance in the clear starlight? And where *are* the clumps of rose-bushes, the hawthorn thickets, the grottoes where we slept upon mosses amid perfumes and music? And what *has* become of the underground palace, with its crystal walls, which we used to light up on fête days with thousands of living jewels? And what *has* become of you, Urgande, Urgele, Alcine, Vivian, and Holda, and Melusine, and you, Melandra, and you, Ariel, and Mab and Titania? Whatever *has* become of you all?”

“Ah! poor Oriana,” said a lizard, who was running away to hide himself in the rocks, “in vain you call. Crowds of rough and thoughtless men have invaded your peaceful solitudes. In order that they might build those ugly houses and open a passage for frightful machines, breathing smoke and flames, they have cut down your trees, set fire to the rose-bushes and hawthorns, filled up your mysterious grottoes and crystal palaces with rocks, while all the fairies have been killed in the general disaster. I saw Habonde, who was trying to escape, die under the foot of a workman, as though she had been a grasshopper.”

On hearing this, Oriana began to cry bitterly over the unfortunate fate of her dear companions, and about her own misfortunes also; for, as you will allow, it was a very melancholy thing to be the only fairy living in the world.

What should she do? Where could she hide herself?



Who would shield her against the fury of wicked men? Her first thought was to flee, to get away from this sad place where all her sisters had perished. But she soon found that she could not do so in a coach, as had been her custom, the four little lady-birds to whom she had always been so kind having overheard the lizard's story, and taken flight with all the ingratitude and speed they were able to put into their wings.

This behavior was keenly felt by Oriana, especially as there was nothing she so much detested as walking. She made the best of it, however, and set out, gingerly picking her way between blades of grass and weeds which were taller than she. She had resolved to go back to the robin redbreasts in the honeysuckle-covered wall. Surely, the father and mother of her little god-children would not fail to welcome her; and their nest would be a refuge for her, at least until the autumn. But Oriana could not travel as fast on two little legs as she could in a hazel-nut drawn by flying lady-birds, and the whole day passed before she saw the flowery wall. You can imagine how tired she was, but she knew now that she would soon be at rest.

"It is I," she called out, as she drew near. "It is I, the fairy god-mother. Come down, and take me on your wings, dear birds, and carry me into your mossy home."

But there was no reply. Not a single head was pushed out from between the leaves to see who was there; and Oriana, on looking closer, saw that some one had stuck a piece of white china in the wall, and fastened a long piece of wire to it, exactly in the place where the nest had been.

As she turned to go, not knowing what would become of her, she saw a woman carrying a basket of wheat in her arms and who was pushing open the door of a barn.

"Ah! madame," cried Oriana, "if you will take me with

you and protect me, you will never have cause to repent of it. Fairies know better than any one else how to separate the good grain from the troublesome tares, and how to winnow the wheat without any fan. In me you would have a servant who would be thoroughly useful to you, and who would save you much labor."

But either the woman did not hear or pretended that she did not; for, opening the barn-door with a swing, she threw the contents of her basket into a machine, which winnowed it without the aid of fairies or any one else.

A little further on Oriana came to a river on whose banks stood a number of men. They were grouped around a pile of huge bales, while in the river lay a ship. Oriana thought that the men did not understand how to get all these heavy goods on board. So she said to them:—

"Ah! gentlemen, if you will take care of me and protect me, you will never be sorry for it. I will call together whole troops of sturdy brownies, so strong that they could play leap-frog with burdens on their backs; and they will quickly carry these heavy things on board the ship for you. Truly, you would find a good servant in me, one who would be very useful to you, and who would save you much labor."

But the men did not hear or at least made out that they did not. Just then, too, a great iron hook, which no hand seemed to hold, came slowly down, caught hold of one of the bales, and, after hoisting it into the air, quietly dropped it upon the ship's deck without any brownie having to trouble himself the least bit about it.

As the day wore on, the little fairy happened to see two men sitting in an inn, playing cards. The darkness was coming, and the men were leaning over the table in order to make out the color and value of the cards.

"Ah! gentlemen," said Oriana, "if you will keep me with you and protect me, you will never repent of it. I will bring here hundreds of the glow-worms which light up the woods, and you will be able to continue your game with all the pleasure possible. Truly, truly, you will find me to be a most useful servant, and one who will save you much trouble."

The card-players did not, however, hear Oriana, or at least pretended not to. One of them made a sign; and immediately three big jets of flame burst out from three iron points, and lit up the whole inn, much better than three thousand glow-worms could have done.

Oriana could not keep back her tears, for she understood now that men and women were becoming too wise to have any more use for a little fairy.

Next day, however, she managed to pick up a little hope. She saw a young girl watching the swallows from her window; and, as Oriana looked at her, she thought, "It is very true that the people of this world have invented a number of extraordinary things, but with all their science and all their strength they have never yet invented anything to take the place of love. How stupid of me not to have thought of this before!"

Then, speaking to the maiden, the last of the fairies said:

"If you please, Miss, I know that in a far-off country there is a handsome youth, as handsome as the day is long, who loves you tenderly, although he has never seen you. He is neither a Prince nor the son of a millionaire; but his hair makes a golden crown for his head, and in his heart he keeps treasures of tenderness for you. If you consent, I will bring him here in a twinkling; and you will be the happiest girl that ever lived."

"That certainly is a very charming promise you are making me," said the young girl, very much astonished, as you may imagine, at such language from such a little body.

"I will keep it, I assure you," said Oriana.

"And what will you ask of me in return for such service?"

"Oh, scarcely anything," replied the fairy: "only that you will allow me to hide myself in one of the dimples that come about the corners of your mouth whenever you smile; and, to do this, I will make myself even smaller than I am now."

"As you please, then," said the girl, smiling. "It's a bargain."

The girl had scarcely finished speaking when Oriana, no bigger than a little pearl, was snuggled in the little rosy nest. Ah! how comfortable it was there, and how pleasant it would be to live there always! Now she would no longer grieve over the destruction of the forest of Broceliande, and she felt that she had a home and friend at last.

Being a little fairy who kept her word, she immediately summoned the handsome youth from the far-away country. He at once appeared in the room, crowned with his golden curls, and knelt before his beloved.

At that moment, however, there came in a hideous old man, with bleared eyes and withered lips. But he carried in his hands an open coffer, in which glittered precious stones to the value of more than a million. Without giving another glance at the kneeling youth, the maiden ran to the old man, and kissed him, smiling so sweetly all the while that poor little Oriana was smothered to death in her dimple.

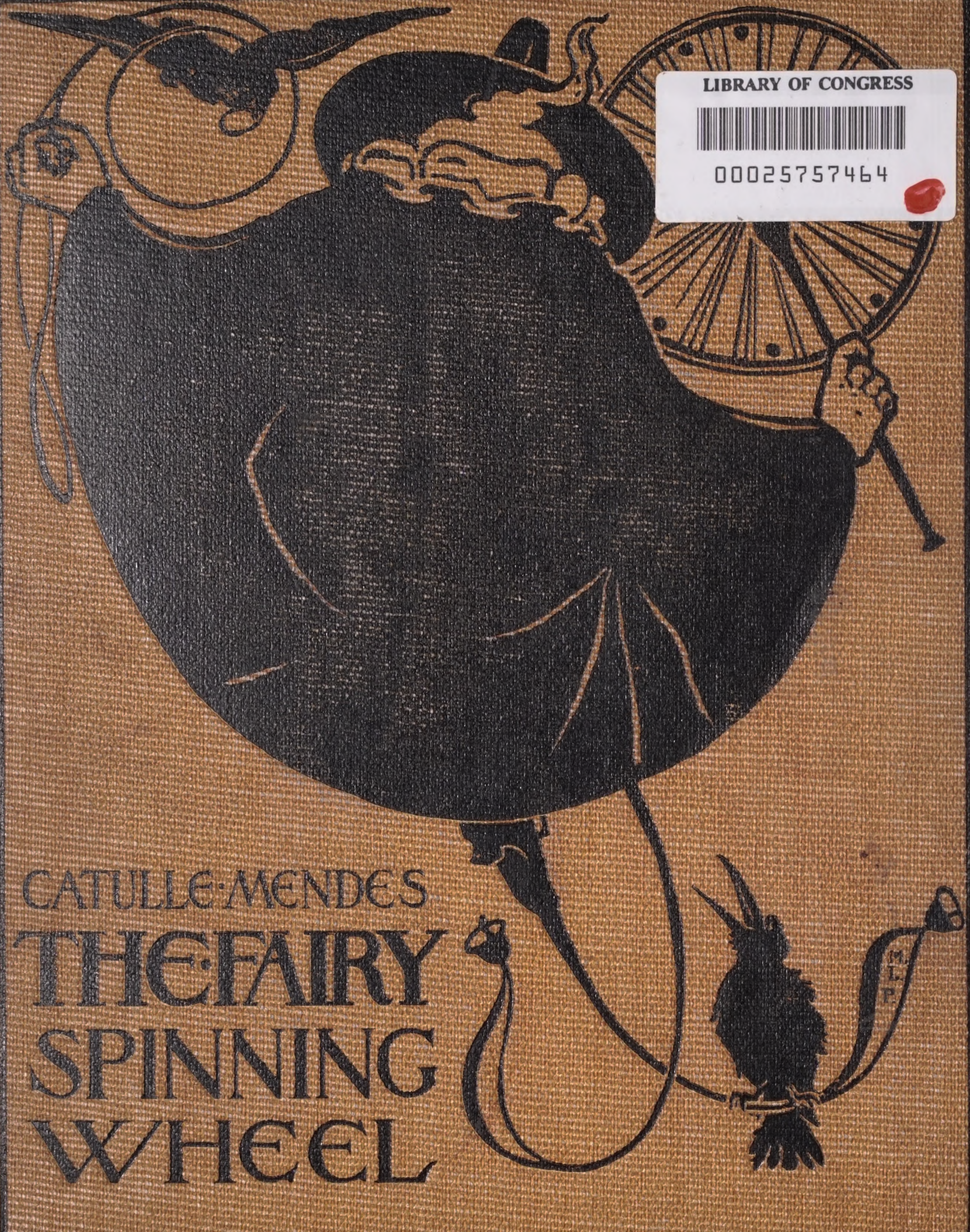




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